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FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3633
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COLLECTIVE
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 2392
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 2512
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1016
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1788
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 2143
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2568
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4996
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUZEJAA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK
RHMFISS/EUCOM POLAD VAIHINGEN GE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1661
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 HARARE 000980

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

AF/S FOR B. WALCH
DRL FOR N. WILETT
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR E. LOKEN AND L. DOBBINS
STATE PASS TO NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [ASEC](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: PARLIAMENT ADJOURNS AND AWAITS OUTCOME

REF: HARARE 933

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) Both houses of Zimbabwe's parliament have now adjourned as they await an agreement between ZANU-PF and the MDC. The more influential House of Assembly will not sit again until November 11, when it will take up a motion to investigate political violence. Meanwhile, the prospect of by-elections to fill six vacant seats has been raised by the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC). END SUMMARY.

No Business and No Money

¶2. (SBU) Zimbabwe's House of Assembly (HOA) has adjourned until November 11 because in the absence of an implemented power-sharing agreement, there is little parliamentary work to be done (ref). The decision was agreed upon by both ZANU-PF and MDC parliamentarians and follows the decision by the upper house, the Senate, to adjourn until November 4. Acting leader of government business, Emmerson Mnangagwa--filling in for Patrick Chinamasa who was tied up in negotiations--said that the HOA could resume activities sooner if an agreement was reached, though the failure of SADC Troika-hosted talks on October 27 makes that unlikely.

¶3. (SBU) Independent press reports have cited lack of funds as another reason for Parliament's adjournment. Parliament is said to have run out of funds for accommodation and allowances for sitting MPs. MPs have been funding their stay in Harare out of their own pockets. (NOTE Parliament is a notoriously under-funded institution, particularly in comparison with government ministries and national security entities. END NOTE.)

¶4. (SBU) Before the HOA adjourned, Speaker Lovemore Moyo

overruled a ZANU-PF objection to a motion to set up a committee to investigate violence leading up to the June 27 presidential run-off election. That motion is on the agenda for November 11. There was also bipartisan support during discussion of a motion to declare a national food emergency.

By-Elections a Possibility

¶5. (SBU) The government-run daily newspaper, The Herald, reported on October 18 that the ZEC planned to fill the six parliamentary vacancies--three in the Senate and three in the HOA--by holding by-elections. This would be in contravention of the signed power-sharing agreement of September 15 that stipulates a 12 month moratorium on by-elections. However, the agreement has no legal effect until encapsulated as Amendment 19 to the Constitution and the ZEC has supported the position that the Electoral Act requires by-elections to be held 14 days after the president files official notification of a vacancy. Mugabe has yet to file any vacancy notice.

¶6. (SBU) Five of the vacancies are in constituencies that were represented by ZANU-PF members, and these constituencies can be expected to vote for ZANU-PF candidates in the future. The sixth vacancy was created when Moyo became speaker. The election, in Matabeleland South, will be hotly contested, although MDC should prevail in a relatively fair election. Moyo told us that as of now there is no evidence of ZANU-PF

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campaigning or intimidation.

COMMENT

¶7. (SBU) While a by-election in Moyo's Matabeleland constituency would be closely contested, a ZANU-PF victory there would not give them legislative control as we expect a majority of the MDC-M MPs to vote with MDC-T on substantive issues. It would be however symbolically significant because the MDC-T would relinquish to ZANU-PF its position as the largest party in Parliament. END COMMENT.

MCGEE